



The Black Intellectual Tradition and the Great Conversation

with Dr. Angel Parham, Dr. Kathryn Smith, Dr. James LaGrand, Dr. Bryan Williams

Panel 2: The Legacy of Anna Julia Cooper

Outline:

The Legacy of Anna Julia Cooper

- **Dr. Angel Parham (00:00):** Essay: “The Higher Education of Women”
When she talks about the education of women she is thinking about women having a very particular kind of contribution to society. What do we make of Anna Julia Cooper’s analysis? Is there something she can say to us today in our particular context?
 - **Dr. Kathryn Smith:** That women were intelligent and that they had a desire for knowledge seemed clear and evidenced in literature. She suggests that women themselves are fearful.
 - What do I do when I want to be a mother?
 - Should I be a professional before I am a mother?
 - How am I going to be with my family?
 - **Dr. Brian Williams:** We need women as CEOs in business and education. This is similar to what Cooper argues. Where do we think that Cooper differs?
 - **Dr. James LaGrand:** There is a natural given-ness to being a woman. What is the relationship between men and women?
 - **Dr. Brian Williams:** You had to be on your toes around Dr. Cooper.
 - **Dr. Angel Parham:** She is very clear about her idea about complementarity between men and women, which is unpopular today. There is a concern about been assimilated into narrow conceptions of the self. Throughout human history women have been limited.
 - Today it seems problematic to claim womanhood, or to say there is anything distinctive about womanhood.
 - Even in women’s colleges, this has become an issue. There are feminists who want women’s spaces, and there are others who say that is an oppressive notion.
- **Dr. Angel Parham (15:10):** How can we bring this to our young people in the way that is life affirming?



- **Dr. Brian Williams:** Do we want to hold out distinct ideals?
- **Dr. Kathryn Smith:** Even portrayals of women in the literature that we present are points of interesting conversation. The cast of women characters are fascinating.
- **Dr. Angel Parham (20:32):** Cooper gives us a mini-history of women. Part of what she is showing is the legacy that women have left us.
 - **Dr. Kathryn Smith:** Why is it especially important to have women in the space that was exclusively male? Why that particular field or terrain?
 - **Dr. Brian Williams:** She was always talking her way into these classes (Greek). She also had to make her case for women.
 - **Dr. Angel Parham:** There often is a pull for women. It is not the same parenting as a woman as it is for a man. I wonder what Cooper might have to say to us about this? Is there a balance to be had?
 - **Dr. Kathryn Smith:** You have a head, heart struggle because you know you have a deep connection. I wonder if this is a question of the kinds of communities that are needed in order to have both.
- **Dr. Angel Parham (30:28):** What are kinds of communities that we have that would make that possible?
 - **Dr. Brian Williams:** In moral thought we often discuss *multiple competing goods*.
 - **Dr. Angel Parham:** Students need models for how to make family and career work.
- **Dr. Angel Parham (35:18):** In what ways might a special educational focus on girls and women of color contribute to the improved situation of young people coming from difficult circumstances?
 - **Dr. Angel Parham:** The more you educate the mothers, that goes directly to increased school enrollment in the next generation. Or start educating them when they are very young girls. Education opens up new vistas.